

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3215**

March 16, 2021

Governor Pedro Pierluisi  
La Fortaleza  
P.O. Box 9020082  
San Juan, PR 00902-0082

Dear Governor Pierluisi:

As you know, New York State has the second highest population of Puerto Ricans outside of the Commonwealth in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The Bronx, which I represent, has a higher concentration of Puerto Ricans than any other county in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Yet, in 2017, the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA) office in New York City was shuttered with little justification. Before closing, this office not only provided valuable services to Puerto Ricans who were born on the island, but it also helped build relationships between the Puerto Rican diaspora in NYC and current residents of Puerto Rico. Its absence has been profoundly noted, which is why I write to urge your administration to consider reopening the PRFAA office in NYC.

After Hurricanes Maria and Irma, thousands of Puerto Ricans came to the New York to restart their lives after losing everything in the natural disasters.<sup>3</sup> Many are now my constituents. They and the groups that advocate on their behalf regularly raise how many former residents of Puerto Rico, particularly seniors, struggle to access their birth certificates, school records, and other important documents from the Government of Puerto Rico.

Additionally, it is important to help Puerto Ricans throughout the diaspora stay connected to the island during this time of reconstruction and economic development. Non-profit organizations, like Acacia Network, NAICA, and many others, have been actively engaged with redevelopment efforts in Puerto Rico. Reopening the PRFAA office in NYC would help these organizations and businesses that seek to connect with local authorities in Puerto Rico in order to assist with economic recovery.

I recognize that your administration was not in charge of the closure of the PRFAA office in New York, but I hope you can see the immense value that it provided. When the original PRFAA office in NYC closed, New York Puerto Ricans were given no explanation or timeline on a potential reopening. They were left to seek administrative services and support from the PRFAA in Orlando,

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<sup>1</sup> "Puerto Rican Population by County," *Pew Research Center*. (August 2019). Available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/interactives/puerto-rican-population-by-county/>

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> "New Estimates: 135,000+ Post-Maria Puerto Ricans Relocated to Stateside," *Center for Puerto Rican Studies*. (March 2018). Available at [https://centropur.hunter.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/data\\_sheets/PostMaria-NewEstimates-3-15-18.pdf](https://centropur.hunter.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/data_sheets/PostMaria-NewEstimates-3-15-18.pdf)

Florida, or from the government affairs office in Washington, D.C. I would appreciate any information and documents your administration could provide on the costs of maintaining the original NYC office and the costs of reopening.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am eager to assist you with this effort in any way that I can, and I look forward to working together in the best interest of Puerto Ricans in the Bronx and on the island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ritchie Torres", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress